

AUGUST 1997

TreeLink News Bulletin

In the works

DNR URBAN and COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

Even though numerous articles have been written about the atrocity of tree topping, this practice still occurs. PlantAmnesty is a nonprofit organization whose goal is "to end the senseless torture and mutilation of trees and shrubs" and has an array of materials available on this topic. If you would like additional information about the ill-effects of topping, proper pruning alternatives or public education materials, please call DNR's Urban and Community Forestry Program at (800) 523-8733 or PlantAmnesty at (206)783-9813 and ask for order blanks to be sent to you.

DON'T TOP TREES!

Trees are often topped because they grow into utility wires, interfere with views or simply grow so large that they worry the landowner. Some people top their trees because of a mistaken impression that the practice is good for trees, especially because of the obvious flush of new growth that follows. Topping is also a result of irreputable "tree experts" knocking on doors and convincing the homeowner that for safety reasons, the job should be done. Their services are then offered - quick 'n cheap.

Why NOT To "Top" - Eight Good Reasons

1. **Starvation:** Good pruning practices rarely remove more than 1/4 of the crown, which in turn does not seriously interfere with the ability of a tree's leafy crown to manufacture food. Topping removes so much of the crown that it upsets an older tree's well-developed crown-to-root ratio and temporarily cuts off its food-making ability.
2. **Shock:** A tree's crown is like an umbrella that shields much of the tree from the direct rays of the sun. By suddenly removing this protection, the remaining bark tissue is so exposed that scalding may result. There may also be a dramatic effect on neighboring trees and shrubs. If these thrive in shade and the shade is removed, poor health or death may result.
3. **Insects and Disease:** The large stubs of a topped tree have a difficult time forming a callus. The terminal location of these cuts, as well as their large diameter, prevent the tree's chemically based natural defense system from doing its job. The stubs are highly vulnerable to insect invasion and the spores of decay fungi. If decay is already present in the limb, opening the limb will speed the spread of the disease.
4. **Weak Limbs:** At best, the wood of a new limb that sprouts after a larger limb is truncated is more weakly attached than a limb that develops more normally. If rot exists or develops at the severed end of the limb, the weight of the sprout makes a bad situation even worse.
5. **Rapid New Growth:** The suggested goal from topping is usually to control the height and spread of a tree. Actually, it has just the opposite effect. The resulting sprouts are far more numerous than normal new growth and they elongate so rapidly that the tree returns to its original height in a very short time - and with a far more dense and dangerous crown and weaker branch attachment.
6. **Tree Death:** Some species of trees are less tolerant to topping than others.
7. **Ugliness:** A topped tree is a disfigured tree. Even with its regrowth it never regains the grace and character of its natural form. The landscape and the community are robbed of a valuable asset.
8. **Cost:** To a worker with a saw, topping a tree is much easier than applying the skill and judgement needed for good pruning. Therefore, topping may cost less in the short run. However, the true costs of topping are hidden. These include: reduced property values, the expense of removal and replacement when the tree dies, the loss of other trees and shrubs if they succumb to changed light conditions, the risk of liability from weakened branches, and increased future maintenance.

-Adapted from Tree City USA Bulletin #8.

GET YOUR FREE TICKET FOR THE PUYALLUP FAIR

The Urban and Community Forestry Program is going to the Western Washington State Fair in Puyallup. If you would like to help spread the word about urban and community forestry, please come and join us. For your effort, you will receive a free admission ticket. The fair runs from September 5th through September 21st and the shifts are from 10 am-3 pm and 3 pm-8 pm. If anyone is interested in staffing the booth, contact Tracy Salisbury at (800)523-8733 or (360)902-1704.



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

Jennifer M. Belcher - Commissioner of Public Lands
Kaleen Cottingham - Supervisor

In the works (continued)

Picks and Shovels

"...of the ten cities named in 1996 by Money Magazine as the 'best places to live in America,' seven of them are Tree City USA's."

-From the Arbor Day newsletter published by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

On the Horizon

TRIVIA: How much more beneficial to the environment is a large urban tree than a rural forest tree?

(answers upside down below)

The purpose of the Washington Urban and Community Forestry Program is to assist communities and nonprofit groups in building self-sustaining urban forestry and tree care programs with strong local support.

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(Henry Arnold, "Sustainable Trees for Sustainable Cities," 1993)

FOREST OWNERS FIELD DAY - SEPTEMBER 13

Urban foresters who manage greenbelts and native forest stands may be interested in attending the *Southwest Washington Forest Owners' Field Day* to be held near Todedo on September 13. The event, sponsored by WSU Cooperative Extension and DNR's Forest Stewardship Program, will teach small forest owners about thinning, pruning, wildlife enhancement, reforestation, special forest products, harvesting and marketing, and more. To receive a program announcement, please call Tracy Salisbury at (800)523-8733 or (360)902-1704.

FOREST PRACTICES ILLUSTRATED GUIDEBOOK NOW AVAILABLE

The new *Forest Practices Illustrated* book is now available from the Department of Natural Resources. Just off the press, this 64-page full-color guidebook uses photos and illustrations to explain many of the most common forest practices rules. The book explains the "why" behind each rule, answer common questions, gives tips for success, and leads the reader to sources of more information and expertise on topics of interest.

The new book is aimed at small forest owners, but should be useful to loggers, forestry contractors, and many others. **Copies of the new *Forest Practices Illustrated* book and the *Forest Practices Rules* book are available free at all DNR Region Offices. Or call 1-800-527-3305, press "O" and ask for "*Forest Practices Illustrated*."**

NEW BACKYARD FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

DNR's new Backyard Forest Stewardship Program provides a "do-it-yourself" guide to caring for trees and forests around your home. The program is aimed at owners of very small parcels—from 10 trees up to 10 acres—smaller than those acreages typically served by the "regular" Forest Stewardship Program. However, the information should prove useful to anyone who owns a home in the woods regardless of the size of ownership.

To request your free Backyard Forest Stewardship Kit, call toll-free: 1-888-STEWKIT (call anytime 24 hrs./7days). The kits are available in both eastern and western Washington versions. Your kit will include information about: wildfire safety; thinning and pruning; wildlife habitat enhancement; tree selection, planting and care; hazard trees; forest health (insects, diseases, tree problems); safe burning; and more. . .

August

- 2-5 International Society of Arboriculture Conference, Salt Lake City . Contact ISA at (217)355-9411.
- 13 PlantAmnesty Meeting of Like Minds, 7 pm-9 pm at Center for Urban Horticulture, Douglas classroom. Contact Cass Turnbull at (206)783-9813.
- 17 PlantAmnesty Garden Tour & Benefit. 11 am-1 pm at the home of Eric Nelson in Fremont. Contact Cass Turnbull at (206)783-9813.
- 29 Deadline for Washington Community Forestry Council Award Nominations. Contact Tracy Salisbury at (800)523-8733 or (360)902-1704.

September

- 6 PNW-ISA Tree Climber's Jamboree, Washington Park Arboretum. Contact PNW-ISA at (206)784-1945.
- 6, 13 & 26 Tree Steward Summer Training Class site TBA. Learn the basics about trees, planting and care. Class size limited to 25, registration is \$25 and includes field guide and t-shirt. Application and advanced sign-up required. Contact Liz Ellis at (206)684-5008.
- 17-20 8th National Urban Forest Conference, Atlanta, GA. "Cities by Nature's Design" is organized by American Forests. Contact American Forests at (202)667-3300.
- 30 ISA Certified Arborist Exam, 1 pm-4 pm at Delta Whistler Hotel, Whistler, B.C.. Contact PNW-ISA at (206)784-1945.

October

- 1-3 "Getting to the Root of Professional Tree Care," 1997 Annual Training Conference of the Pacific Northwest Chapter - International Society of Arboriculture in Whistler, British Columbia. Contact PNW-ISA at (206)784-1945.
- 3-16 Trees Across Washington Relay. Starts in Friday Harbor and finishes in Spokane. This is a non-motorized relay with volunteers who carry a Lodgepole pine seedling along the route by boat, bike, foot and horse. For more information, contact Mark Steelquist at (206)624-7075.